REMARKS

This application has been reviewed in light of the Office Action dated August 10, 2005. Claims 25-27, 29-34, 36-41 and 43-45 are pending in this application, of which Claims 25, 32 and 39 are in independent form. Claims 28, 35 and 42 have been canceled, without prejudice or disclaimer of subject matter. Claims 25, 30-32, 37-39, 44 and 45 have been amended to define still more clearly what Applicants regard as their invention.

Claims 25-45 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over U.S. Patent No. 5,077,811 (Onda).

First, the cancellation of Claims 28, 35 and 42 renders the rejection of those claims moot.

As shown above, Applicants have amended independent Claims 25, 32 and 39 in terms that more clearly define what they regard as their invention. Applicants submit that these amended independent claims, together with the remaining claims dependent thereon, are patentably distinct from the cited prior art for at least the following reasons.

Claim 25 is directed to an image processing method for processing an input document image. The method includes the steps of: (1) displaying an instruction input window to receive a first instruction and a second instruction from a user, wherein the first instruction indicates whether the orientation of the document image should be corrected automatically or manually, and wherein the second instruction indicates whether or not a tilt of the document image should be automatically corrected; (2) determining, based on the first instruction received in the instruction input window, whether the user has instructed that the orientation of the document image should be corrected automatically or manually; (3) automatically discriminating the orientation of the document image as one of 0, 90, 180 and 270 degrees if it is determined in the determining step that the user has instructed that the orientation of the document image should be automatically corrected; (4) automatically

rotating the document image based on the discriminated orientation of the document image if it is determined in the determining step that the user has instructed the orientation of the document image should be automatically corrected; (5) rotating the document image according to a rotation angle of one of 0, 90, 180 and 270 degrees instructed by the user if it is determined in the determining step that the user has instructed that the orientation of the document image should be manually corrected; and (6) if it is determined based on the second instruction that the tilt of the document image should be automatically corrected, automatically correcting the tilt of the document image which is rotated in the automatic rotating step or in the rotating step.

Among other notable features of Claim 25 is (1) displaying an instruction input window to receive a first instruction and a second instruction from a user, wherein the first instruction indicates whether the orientation of the document image should be corrected automatically or manually, and wherein the second instruction indicates whether or not a tilt of the document image should be automatically corrected; and (2) if it is determined based on the second instruction that the tilt of the document image should be automatically corrected, automatically correcting the tilt of the document image which is rotated in the automatic rotating step or in the rotating step.

Onda relates to an image processing system having an image reader for reading an image on a document to produce image signals, a memory for storing the image signals, and a data processing unit for processing the image signals. Onda discusses examining the image data to determine whether the image is in a correct orientation, and if it is not, rotating the image data by a required angle in a required direction. However, nothing has been found in Onda that would teach or suggest "displaying an instruction input window to receive a first instruction and a second instruction from a user, wherein the first instruction indicates whether the orientation of the document image should be corrected automatically or manually, and wherein the second instruction indicates whether

or not a tilt of the document image should be automatically corrected," as recited in Claim 25. Further, nothing has been found in Onda that would teach or suggest that "if it is determined based on the second instruction that the tilt of the document image should be automatically corrected, automatically correcting the tilt of the document image which is rotated in said automatic rotating step or in said rotating step," as recited in Claim 25.

Accordingly, Applicants submit that Claim 25 is allowable over Onda.

A review of the other art of record has failed to reveal anything which, in Applicants' opinion, would remedy the deficiencies of the art discussed above, as a reference against Claim 25.
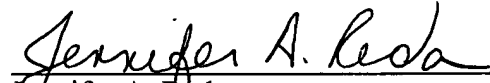
Independent Claims 32 and 39 are apparatus and computer-readable storage medium claims, respectively, corresponding to method Claim 25, and are believed to be patentable over Onda for at least the same reasons as discussed above in connection with Claim 25.

The other claims in this application are each dependent from one or another of the independent claims discussed above and are, therefore, believed patentable for the same reasons. Since each dependent claim is also deemed to define an additional aspect of the invention, however, the individual reconsideration of the patentability of each on its own merits is respectfully requested.

In view of the foregoing amendments and remarks, Applicants respectfully request early and favorable continued examination of the present application.

Applicants' undersigned attorney may be reached in our New York office by telephone at (212) 218-2100. All correspondence should continue to be directed to our address given below.

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